

JMJ

Burgos
September 25, 1976

This letter is personal and written only for Father Aloysius

My dear Father,

Warmest greetings from one of the least deserving of your spiritual children. I humbly beg your forgiveness for my imprudence in the past few weeks that has caused you great suffering. In the past four months four seminarians have come to me with great and dire need for financial help. Unwisely I gave them addresses of persons who I thought might be interested in helping seminarians from poor families. I thought this was better than asking for money from Madrid for needs that were not my own. But the problem is, as Kevin well explained, some people do talk and cannot give donations quietly. Besides this then linked Burgos and my name with the MAP that only made things worse. I see the problem and will try to solve it today.

This letter basically deals with another more confidential matter that I have shared with no one else except with Kevin whom I feel we can have full confidence in. It is the following:

Before I left for Berlin, I was in Madrid a day or two discussing matters of the MAP with Father Alonso. The question came around of canonical or ecclesiastical structure in regard with the future of the MAP, and how to start after our ordinations. I felt it was in order to ask Father Alonso about Father General's initial approval. He said this was between Father General and Your Reverence between the time of 1971-1973 on the conditions first that the Father Provincials of both provinces concerned were in favor of it, and then after we left the Claretian novitiate in Fatima it was pending on the Bishop of Fatima. When these two successive periods ended Father General wrote to Your Reverence stating tactfully that he was sorry that the Bishop had not accepted us as Father General had expected he would. Father Alonso said that the letter he (Fr. Alonso) received was clear that this apostolate was finished for Your Reverence. Then I asked him (Fr. Alonso) about ourselves (the young men) he said we are not under obedience to the Father General thus we can fulfill the plans Your Reverence gave us in Fatima whenever the time comes for it.

The above made me realize that Your Reverence, whom I see acting in good conscience, has had to act with secrecy before your superiors at home, is suffering very much because of a possible misunderstanding. I do not accuse anyone of ill-will or anything else that is less than the highest of pure intentions to please Our Lord and the Blessed Mother. This is why I realize how much Your Reverence loves me and cares for me and suffers for me. Neither do I in any way feel less enthusiastic about the future of the MAP, about your original plans being fulfilled to the utmost and my personal desire to participate as soon as I am able. Therefore the reason I did not write was not to compromise Your Reverence before your local superiors who probably feel as Father Alonso does -- that your apostolate is no longer for the MAP project. Father Alonso feels that this is also the mind of Father General.

But this does not mean that Father Alonso thinks the MAP should not continue. He rather sees it as a legacy clearly outlined by Your Reverence from 1971-1973 that your

followers must accomplish without compromise to your Reverence in your new apostolate, although you can pray for our success and continue even in Heaven interceding on our behalf to the fullest.

I am just a student and I do not wish to speak out of turn or disobey your Reverence. But I wonder if God is not asking Your Reverence from an ever greater detachment from this work as the greatest sacrifice in your life out of sheer love for God and even as a guarantee that the work will flower -- after the grain of wheat has thoroughly died. God accomplishes things of this sort through His own power and needs no man to accomplish His will to the full. Recall the advice given to Your Reverence in Fatima: "If it is God's Will, no created force can stop it." The opposite is also true: "If it is God's will, it is not the product of any created force." This is especially true for religious orders that are the work of God and not a human work.

When I see Your Reverence suffering so extremely I wish to console you by reminding Your Reverence to recall how it was when you first received Father General's letter at the end of our stay in Fatima. You had such a complete trust, although suffering greatly, that it was now in God's hands and that He was asking for our surrender. I told you at the time that I considered the Congregation already spiritually founded and that your work as a founder was fully accomplished.

Instead of having to keep secrets in might be better to admit to our superiors that we have left the project fully in God's hands to that He may be free to mold it and shape it in the interim without our interventions, except through the most powerful force of prayer. We could encourage young men to be priests merely, leaving their future decision up to the grace of God and pointing out to them good seminaries. God will arrange the future of the MAP. Our attempts to make the work come sooner than Our Lord wishes it might only retard its growth. The human sign of readiness for our co-operation in an active way is the moment we are in a position to move -- which means canonical permissions from a bishop. Until that is obtained it is meaningless to work under secrecy. It is even dangerous because it may later impede our recognition by the Church.

By saying this I am not in any way looking for faults. I am trying to forestall future obstacles to our free exercise of canonical approval. This approval has to be a written and formal document recognizable by any Catholic religious or layman, who then will not have canonical power to stop us. (This is one of the reasons I would like to study Canon Law, to fight for the success of the MAP)

Father General's permission was a conditional permission. The conditions were not met, therefore if the conditions are lacking, and if he himself realizes it, we are not safe to act -- especially if we are desirous of the good of the MAP. The only way I can be convinced of the contrary is if Father General makes it clear and public (as in a written letter) that is permission for Your Reverence was never revoked, as his letter at the end of our stay in Fatima implicitly states. I have not seen the letter to Father Alonso in which he says it is clear.

But, Father, do not feel that I personally am affected by this. I am not under obedience to Father General. Therefore I feel free to move. But as long as Your Reverence is connected materially with the MAP I cannot act, except by praying for the MAP.

I know that Your Reverence has done your best to help us and at the same time be disconnected. But I feel God does not even wish persons, even those who are close to you, to discuss these matter with you since your local superiors wish otherwise.

Be assured that this letter and its contents remain only between Your Reverence and myself. Rejoice that God is blessing us. I feel more confident than ever about Your project and that it will definitely become a reality some day. God is taking us gently down this path of abnegation. We only want His Will and this is the test.

As an addition - dear and loving Father, if anything in this letter sounds uncharitable, believe me I did not mean it in that way. I love you my Father and for this I have had the full confidence to open my mind and heart to you without holding anything back. My only desire has been to soothe you, to relieve you of some of the great pains you have just recently suffered by misunderstandings and pneumonia. You are the perfect ideal for me in my prayer for the priesthood. Your personal holiness is my model and my strength in time of trial. Thank you deeply for the great gift of the MAP which you so unselfishly and lovingly bequeathed to us.

In Mary's Heart, Charles